UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

ACC

Administrative Committee on Coordination

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REPORT OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS ON ITS FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF 1993

(Geneva, 16-19 March 1993)

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION	1	3
I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION	2	3
II. DISCUSSIONS HELD BY THE COMMITTEE	3 - 45	3
A. Role and functioning of the Committee, including its terms of reference	3 - 4	3
B. Review of the subsidiary machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination	5 - 10	5
C. Coordination of humanitarian assistance: emergency relief and the continuum to rehabilitation and development	11 - 14	6
D. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199	15 - 19	8
E. Poverty reduction and the role of the United Nations system	20 - 23	10
F. Other matters	24 - 41	11
1. Review of policies and procedures on technical cooperation among developing countries	24	11
2. Progress reports	25 - 41	11
(a) Expanded operational activities training programme	25 - 31	11
(b) Guidance note for the use of the United Nations Volunteers	32	12
(c) Implementation of the successor support costs arrangements	33 - 40	12

CONTENTS (continued)

	Paragraphs	Page
(d) Status report on the activities of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy	41	14
G. Future programme of work, provisional agenda and date of next meeting	42 - 45	14

Annexes

I.	LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	17
II.	AGENDA OF THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF 1993	19
III.	DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE (NEW) CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS	20
IV.	DEVELOPING A COMMON INTERPRETATION OF THE PROGRAMME APPROACH IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: STATUS AND ISSUES	21
V.	UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS AND THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: GUIDANCE NOTE	25
VI.	THE COUNTRY STRATEGY NOTE	29
VII.	NATIONAL EXECUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	33
VIII.	AREAS OF POTENTIAL COLLABORATION ON POVERTY REDUCTION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM	37

INTRODUCTION

1. The Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (CCSQ) held its first regular session of 1993 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 16 to 19 March 1993. The list of participants is contained in annex I to the present report. The agenda for the session, which was adopted by the Committee, is contained in annex II.

I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION

2. The following matters are brought to the attention of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC):

(a) Role and functioning of the new Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (paras. 3 to 4);

(b) Review of the subsidiary machinery of ACC (paras. 5 to 10);

(c) Coordination of humanitarian assistance (paras. 11 to 14);

(d) Implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 (paras. 15 to 19);

(e) Review of policies and procedures on technical cooperation amongst developing countries (para. 24);

(f) Guidance note for the use of United Nations Volunteers (para. 32);

(g) Future programme of work and recommendation of the Committee regarding its next meeting (paras. 42 to 45).

II. DISCUSSIONS HELD BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Role and functioning of the Committee, including its terms of reference

3. The Committee reviewed a range of issues relating to the role and functioning of the new Committee (CCSQ) and, subject to the fact that ACC itself may wish to review the role further in the light of the anticipated final report of the senior consultant to the Secretary-General on the restructuring of the ACC machinery, reached the following conclusions:

(a) A new committee with a broad and challenging role to play in supporting ACC on substantive issues relating to development policies, programme coordination and operational activities was created. It would need to build on the experience of the former CCSQ (OPS);

(b) The revised terms of reference proposed by the Organizational Committee of ACC (OC/ACC) were agreed subject to paragraph 2 reading "Consider

issues related to enhancing the responsiveness of the system to national objectives and priorities, taking into account global and regional goals and strategies; promote programme coordination and collaborative arrangements among organizations of the system around substantive priority themes; and review their progress periodically", and to the addition of a paragraph 7 reading "Review the reports of designated subsidiary bodies and, as appropriate, make specific recommendations for consideration by ACC". The full text of the draft terms of reference is contained in annex III of the present report;

(c) To reflect its new mandate, it was suggested that the Committee be named the Consultative Committee on Policies, Programmes and Operational Activities;

(d) As the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) and the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (CCSQ) would inevitably touch on overlapping areas of interest, particular attention would need to be paid to their respective programmes of work to ensure complementarity in their respective approaches;

(e) ACC would set the programme and priorities of the Committee, which would respond to requirements of intergovernmental bodies and would also take initiatives on issues it saw to be of emerging importance;

(f) The experience of having an inter-sessional mechanism such as the core secretariat to support the Coordinator was found to be valuable and such a mechanism should be maintained. Its functioning should remain transparent and, subject to the balancing consideration of a manageably small and effective group, should be open to all organizations, not least of all the small technical agencies. In the interests of cost-effectiveness and the desirability of representative participation, the mechanism should as far as possible arrange to meet in conjunction with other meetings attended by member organizations. Such meetings of the mechanism would be in addition to a more systematic continuation and commitment to task-oriented working groups on substantive issues, as reflected in the new Committee's terms of reference;

(g) The secretariat of the Committee should be strengthened and its budget should be increased to enable the Committee to respond adequately to its broader mandate;

(h) All member organizations must contribute to the budget on the basis of an agreed cost-sharing formula that took into account the Committee's broader mandate;

(i) The Committee agreed that, in the light of experience to date and the objectives of the Committee, there was a continuing need for an independent and neutral secretariat which would collaborate closely with the United Nations. This objective would not necessarily be met through a consolidated ACC secretariat. The Committee requested its Chairman to convey to the Chairman of OC/ACC the sentiments of members on the future location of the CCSQ secretariat;

(j) The Chairman should continue to be appointed in accordance with the principle of rotation, while his tenure of office should be of sufficient

duration and should as far as possible overlap with that of the Coordinator, so as to ensure continuity and the smooth functioning of the Committee;

(k) The Coordinator should continue to be so designated, his/her autonomy and independence should continue to be assured and he/she should be appointed at the D1 level (some members expressed a preference for flexibility and for the post to be at the D1/D2 level), so as to ensure the selection of a candidate with the relevant background and experience. In this connection, organizations were invited to provide the secretariat with their comments on the existing job description by 27 March at the latest, so that it could be finalized, candidates could be invited and speedy action could be taken to complete recruitment and assumption of duties by 1 July. His/her term of office should be for a period of two years, with the possibility of a maximum extension of two years.

4. Regarding the next Chairman and Coordinator of CCSQ, the Committee recalled the views expressed by CCSQ(OPS) at its second regular session in 1992, when it noted that its Coordinator would be ending his tenure and recommended that its current Chairman should, for the sake of providing much needed continuity in the work of the Committee, remain in office for a further period. The Committee also expressed its warm appreciation of his Chairmanship in a difficult period, during which he had retained the full confidence of its members and helped achieve good progress in the work of the Committee over a wide range of issues. Action on the recruitment of the Coordinator is covered in paragraph 3 (k) above.

B. Review of the subsidiary machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

5. CCSQ was entrusted with carrying out a review of the subsidiary machinery of ACC, focusing its attention on recommending the retention, abolition or revision of arrangements of the four bodies mentioned below. Such a review, it agreed, must necessarily be of a tentative nature, since a number of elements in the ongoing restructuring of the ACC machinery remained to be clarified; the review would in turn have a further bearing on the future programme of work of CCSQ. Recommendations were made concerning the following four bodies:

(a) Subcommittee on Statistical Activities

(b) Ad Hoc Inter-agency Working Group on Demographic Estimates and Projections

(c) Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Coordination in Matters of International Drug Abuse Control

(d) Task Force on Rural Development

6. With respect to the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and the Ad Hoc Inter-agency Working Group on Demographic Estimates and Projections, CCSQ expressed wide support for the activities carried out by both bodies. It was of the view that a link between them should be established so that the Demographic Estimates Working Group could report to or through the Statistical Subcommittee.

While encouraging a closer working relationship, the distinctive character of both bodies should be retained.

7. It was agreed that in the light also of legislative requirements reflected in General Assembly resolution 47/100, the Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Coordination in Matters of International Drug Abuse Control should be retained. While recognizing its merits as an instrument of coordination, the body should focus increasingly on technical aspects and joint planning for the future.

8. In its review of the Task Force on Rural Development, CCSQ recognized the merits of the mechanism; the Committee felt that the issues with which it was seized should continue to be addressed and the Task Force should be retained. Some members felt that consideration should be given to expanding its terms of reference to include poverty alleviation, both rural and urban.

9. In the light of paragraph 5 above, the Committee felt that a further review of the terms of reference of the mechanisms mentioned in that paragraph would be in order at a later stage. It agreed in the meantime that, given their developmental, programme coordination and operational dimensions, they should report to CCSQ directly, while any matters relating to sustainable development would be brought as appropriate to the attention of the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development.

10. With regard to the subsidiary bodies identified in category 1 of the Secretary-General's letter of 23 December 1992, which CCSQ might absorb, the Committee agreed that, in addition to the fact that some key aspects of the ACC restructuring process had not been completed, it did not have all the necessary information on, inter alia, their mandates, work programmes and priorities. It would therefore revert to the subject at the earliest opportunity and requested the secretariat to complete the collection of that data. In principle, CCSQ would not absorb their complete work programmes but would take up issues on a task-oriented basis.

C. Coordination of humanitarian assistance: emergency relief and the continuum to rehabilitation and development

11. As requested by OC/ACC, CCSQ held discussions on the basis of a paper prepared by the United Nations on the item "Coordination of humanitarian assistance: emergency relief and the continuum of rehabilitation and development", with a view to making a contribution to a background paper to be prepared by the Department of Humanitarian Assistance for the consideration of the item by ACC at its meeting from 19 to 21 April 1993 and subsequently by the Economic and Social Council at its 1993 substantive session.

12. On the basis of the Committee's exchange of views, specific points that the Committee wished to see reflected or further elaborated in the paper destined for ACC were identified as follows:

(a) Importance of preventive action.

(b) Early warning. Assessing existing capacities accessible to the Department of Humanitarian Assistance; mechanisms to trigger early response by the United Nations system.

(c) Clarity of definition of complex emergencies and their relation to other types of emergencies.

(d) Timely assessment, agency participation, scope and objective of assessment missions and preparation of the Consolidated Appeal.

(e) Follow-up, accountability to donors and standardized reporting procedures, including tracking of contributions.

(f) Resource mobilization. Attention to non-food aid, role of the Department of Humanitarian Assistance and that of the agencies, and public awareness.

(g) Central Emergency Revolving Fund. Experience to date.

(h) Coordination of humanitarian response. Leadership by the Department of Humanitarian Assistance:

(i) Allocation of responsibilities taking into account mandates/expertise/capacities: role of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC);

(ii) IASC support structure.

(i) Field-level coordination.

(j) Security of United Nations and non-United Nations relief personnel, recruitment, training on risk management, communications, insurance coverage, evaluation procedures and conditions of operation.

(k) Lateral coordination: peace-keeping and peacemaking.

(l) Maintenance of an effective and rapid response of humanitarian aid in politically sensitive situations.

(m) Continuum or "contiguum":

(i) Assessment of rehabilitation needs;

(ii) Link with reconstruction and development;

(iii) Link with Government plans and strategies;

(iv) Role of development agencies.

(n) Constraints to resource mobilization for rehabilitation and development and governmental structures.

13. CCSQ also highlighted a number of issues which it would like to bring to the particular attention of ACC, namely:

(a) Identification of situations, based on early warning information, that might need to be addressed;

(b) Mechanisms for operationalizing United Nations system action based on early warning indicators;

(c) Modalities for identifying rehabilitation needs and role of development organizations in the assessment and appeals process;

(d) Resource mobilization and follow-up;

(e) Field-coordination structures.

14. It was agreed that the United Nations would take the above points into account and reflect them in a modified conference paper for submission to OC/ACC.

D. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199

15. The Committee gave considerable attention to the implications of General Assembly resolution 47/199 and recognized its importance to the future effectiveness of operational activities within the United Nations system. It recognized that the organizations of the system had a clear collective and individual responsibility to give full and prompt effect to the resolution within the scope of their respective basic instruments and the guidance of their respective governing bodies. The action by the system would need to integrate into a coherent whole the relevant expertise and inputs of organizations of the system.

16. The Committee took note of the position of the World Bank that, since the resolution dealt with operational activities of a grant type it (and related implementing mechanisms) did not apply to the Bretton Woods institutions. However, the Bank was ready to enter into consultations to enhance the linkages between such mechanisms as the Country Strategy Note and corresponding mechanisms of the Bank.

17. The Committee took note of and reached the following conclusions on General Assembly resolution 47/199:

(a) Having considered the relevant provisions of the resolution on the Country Strategy Note to be prepared by interested recipient Governments, the Committee reviewed the ACC guidelines adopted in 1992 and effected a number of amendments to make them fully consistent with the provisions of the resolution. The relevant text, which is at annex VI, will be transmitted by the United Nations to resident coordinators for appropriate action;

(b) In response to the requirement that the system promote an early agreement on a common interpretation of the programme approach, the Committee reaffirmed its commitment to the spirit and content of the common interpretation

and guiding principles adopted by ACC in 1992 and also agreed on an input to the relevant section of the Secretary-General's report to the Economic and Social Council, elaborating a number of considerations relating to the promotion of the approach in the light of resolution 47/199. The text of the note and of the common interpretation and guiding principles are at annex IV;

(c) In response to a further provision of the resolution requiring the system to reach early agreement on an effective methodology for the evaluation of the programme approach, the Committee requested the Inter-agency Working Group on Evaluation, or a working group thereof, to take the necessary action and to report to CCSQ at an early date;

(d) Action on provisions relating to the harmonization and adaptation of programming cycles would rest with members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) organizations;

(e) The United Nations had taken preliminary steps to implement paragraphs 33 and 34 of the resolution on a common United Nations system manual and on the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures relating to operational activities. An open-ended working group of the JCGP was also created to address those issues. The Committee would follow up the matter in the light of JCGP recommendations;

(f) In response to the request that the system reach agreement on a common interpretation of national execution, the Committee agreed on a text which included guiding principles and approaches; it is at annex VII;

(g) With regard to the provisions relating to decentralization and delegation of authority to field offices which were addressed primarily to governing bodies, the Committee noted that CCSQ(OPS) had in 1992 agreed on objectives and guiding principles of decentralization and that a working group led by the World Health Organization (WHO), was seized of the matter and would report to the Committee at its next session;

(h) While recalling the substantial practical work done on behalf of ACC over the past three years on enhancing the role and effectiveness of the resident coordinator system, the Committee recognized that much further work would be required once the Secretary-General had completed his restructuring plans, which had direct implications for the resident coordinator system; it agreed to revert to the matter at the appropriate time, when an open-ended working group could be convened by the United Nations. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund, WHO, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization indicated their interest in participating in such a group;

(i) Besides launching a successful training programme for senior field representatives of the system, CCSQ(OPS) had endorsed an expanded programme of operational activities training through the International Training Centre at Turin. The programmes, as well as the practical implications arising from the relevant provisions of the General Assembly resolution, were being referred to the Committee's Advisory Panel on Training, with the request that it report

fully to CCSQ at its next session on all the implications of the resolution, together with specific recommendations thereon.

18. The Committee furthermore reviewed the draft (internal) Management Plan for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 prepared by the United Nations, made a number of suggestions in regard to it and invited organizations to send any further comments to the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development by early April, so that a draft plan for submission to the Economic and Social Council could be prepared and made available in advance, as part of the Secretary-General's programme response, for consideration by an inter-sessional meeting of the Committee in early June in New York. That occasion would provide a further opportunity to agree on additional measures to be taken by the system on relevant provisions of the resolution.

19. Finally, the Committee welcomed the assurances provided by the United Nations of its firm intention to engage the system in a fully collaborative manner in the relevant aspects of the implementation of the resolution, including the preparation of the Secretary-General's annual report to the Economic and Social Council. The Committee in turn reiterated its own and each organization's responsibility for ensuring a response that reflected the system's commitment to the implementation of the resolution.

E. Poverty reduction and the role of the United Nations system

20. In introducing the subject of poverty reduction, the World Bank representative described the recent organizational changes in the Bank and the resultant enhanced focus on poverty reduction. He also summarized the findings of a recent progress report on the Bank's poverty reduction strategy and noted that this report called for intensifying collaboration with other agencies both at the institutional and country level in order to ensure that substantial headway was made in reducing poverty.

21. The representative noted that collaboration was needed to maximize effective use of scarce resources, avoid duplication and waste and reduce the risk of overburdening the limited administrative capacities of developing countries. He identified potential areas of collaboration within the United Nations system (see annex VIII). Intensified collaboration was however likely to prove difficult to achieve, given different organizational structures and different agency cultures. Any effort would need to begin modestly and on a small scale, preferably at the country level, and the mechanics of such coordination would need to be fully thought through and understood by all concerned.

22. The Bank representative invited informal reactions to potential areas of collaboration and suggestions on how agencies might proceed. If there was sufficient interest, a few agencies might get together to prepare a more formal proposal for further consideration. He emphasized that these were tentative ideas which were purely exploratory and not a formal proposal from the World Bank. Indeed, it would be inappropriate for the Bank to make such a proposal on its own; proposals needed to reflect other views, be thoroughly thought through and represent the views of at least a core group of agencies.

23. The Committee welcomed the information provided by the representative of the World Bank and acknowledged the considerable potential for collaboration in the field of poverty alleviation. It was agreed that interested organizations would respond to the Bank on the key areas relevant to their work as a basis for a more structured and in-depth discussion within the CCSQ framework to be held at a later stage.

F. Other matters

1. Review of policies and procedures on technical cooperation among developing countries

24. The Committee reviewed a document prepared by a meeting of inter-agency focal points on technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and agreed to the text subject to the following:

(a) "The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has supported TCDC activities according to specific Guidelines. The guidelines are now being revised to increase the effectiveness of the promotional and catalytic role of the Fund in view of the greater scope of technical cooperation among developing countries in the areas of family planning, maternal and child health, and population and sustainable development. With an assigned focal point and an internal task force, UNFPA monitors TCDC initiatives in its country, regional and interregional programmes."

to follow after paragraph 14;

(b) Add UNFPA to the three other organizations named within parentheses at the end of paragraph 16 on page 4;

(c) Reflecting also the primary role and responsibility of developing countries themselves for the promotion of TCDC, add a paragraph to reflect the system's role in assisting/strengthening the establishment/functioning of national TCDC focal points.

2. Progress reports

(a) Expanded operational activities training programme

25. The Director of Training at the International Training Centre in Turin reported on progress made in the implementation of the ongoing and expanded training programmes since the last meeting of CCSQ(OPS) in September 1992.

26. He reported that three coordination workshops for senior field representatives of the system would be undertaken in 1993: for country teams from least developed countries in March, island developing countries in July and disaster-prone countries and countries facing humanitarian crises in the fourth quarter. The response by way of nominations to the least developed countries workshop had been very encouraging.

27. Planning and design meetings for the above workshops were held, including a very useful meeting of staff training specialists from key agencies of the system, and a number of adjustments were made to the methodology of the workshops. The Turin Centre would report in full on the implementation of those recommendations to the next meeting of the Committee's Advisory Panel on Training.

28. A review by a senior consultant of the coverage of the "small agencies" in future workshops was also under way and a "brainstorming" session with interested organizations was planned for 30 March 1993 in Geneva.

29. Good progress was being made in the development and design of the new training series in support of national capacity strengthening in the management of the development process, which had been recommended by CCSQ(OPS) and since reflected in General Assembly resolution 47/199. The first training of trainers programme was scheduled for May 1993 in Turin. The advice and cooperation of all agencies was being sought in the further development of those programmes.

30. Bearing in mind the common system ownership of these programmes, another meeting of the Advisory Panel (originally constituted by CCSQ(OPS)), for which a provisional agenda had already been circulated to member organizations, would be held in early June 1993 in New York. This would in particular present an opportunity to review the implications of the various provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/199 relating to training. The Panel would also consider concerns expressed regarding the coverage of the situation of the "small" agencies; financial matters relating to the programme; the selection of resource persons for the workshops; and the continuing need to assure high quality presentations and a diversity of views and perspectives. The reports of Advisory Panel meetings would continue to be brought to the attention of members of the Committee individually and collectively.

31. The Committee was informed that organizations would very shortly be sent an advance text of the Inventory of Operational Activities Training undertaken by member organizations, with the request that they convey any final amendments or additions to the CCSQ secretariat by 30 April at the latest.

(b) Guidance note for the use of the United Nations Volunteers

32. Following discussions at sessions of CCSQ(OPS) in 1992, the UNV programme submitted a draft guidance note, which had been prepared in consultation with relevant organizations of the system, for the use of United Nations Volunteers. The note was adopted subject to a few amendments and the full text is at annex V.

(c) Implementation of the successor support costs arrangements

33. The Chairman of the Task Force on Support Costs reported on the latest position regarding the implementation of the UNDP successor support costs arrangements. He noted that they had become effective in July 1992 and that there had been a sharp fall-off in approvals for the five-agency group, also as a result of UNDP resource constraints. In addition, the year 1992 had witnessed a large increase in the modality of national execution (NEX), which had accounted for around 40 per cent of all approvals in 1992.

34. The full Task Force had met last November and encountered certain problems in efficiently executing the technical support services system (TSS)-1 programme (1992-1993) agreed by the Governing Council in May 1992, little if any evidence of take-off of the TSS-2 facility and sharp declines in agency operational involvement. The group had felt that the overall situation had not improved, in spite of some positive action which UNDP had taken to formulate better guidelines for TSS-1 implementation and to generate a stepped-up flow of TSS-2 requests to accompany NEX projects. The new TSS-1 programme for 1994-1995 was seriously delayed and could not be presented in full to the forthcoming UNDP Governing Council, while TSS-2, a pillar of the new arrangements, was not catching on. Approvals for Administrative and Operational Services were also much rarer than had been envisaged. Small agencies seemed to be equally if not more vulnerable, with their new approvals decreasing significantly for somewhat different reasons.

35. That situation called for even more vigorous action to get the new arrangements on track and to continue close consultation between UNDP and the agencies under the Task Force, which should meet in the near future for a further comprehensive review of the situation and to discuss necessary joint action.

36. In response, the representative of UNDP recognized the broad validity of the concerns expressed and of the fact that some aspects of the implementation arrangements might, in retrospect, have been handled more effectively.

37. It was however important to place the problems in a wider context. The system was endeavouring to implement a set of very complex arrangements, during a period when overall resource constraints had necessitated a 25 per cent reduction in country Indicative Planning Figures consequent on a decrease of voluntary contributions in 1993 and further aggravated by exchange rate fluctuations in the short period since November 1992. Other factors, all of which had affected the pace of approval and delivery related to the beginning of a new programming cycle; the inevitably slow process of elaborating (in consultation with United Nations system partners) and consequent delay in issuing and implementing guidelines on the programme approach; and new legislation on the promotion of national execution. In addition, the interpretation of Governing Council decision 90/34 and its emphasis on human development issues appeared to have resulted in a shift of emphasis away from some of the more specialized technical areas, with negative consequences for some technical agencies. The adverse resource situation was moreover part of a deteriorating mood and even of an erosion of rationale regarding technical cooperation, whether multilateral or bilateral.

38. UNDP thus felt that the problems of approval and delivery rates were much wider than the support cost issue and were to be faced collectively by UNDP and its partners in the system. For its part, it would make every effort to address the specific issues raised by member organizations in regard to the successor arrangements, would intensify its dialogue with the smaller technical agencies not covered by the successor support cost arrangements and would include the regional bureaux in the dialogue with a view to remedying the weaknesses identified in the implementation of the arrangements at the field level. It would furthermore consider the request to delay the deadline for the new TSS-1 exercise in view of other imperatives. UNDP had also taken note of the relative

lack of demand for TSS-2 services, which was also a matter that raised broader and serious issues for the system to address collectively.

39. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Task Force would review all the above-mentioned issues and the small technical agencies would be invited to participate in the review.

40. Finally, representatives of some small technical agencies drew attention to the need to ensure a satisfactory solution to the problems faced by some Governments in respect of continuing advice, equipment spares, software etc. after the termination of projects.

(d) Status report on the activities of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy

41. The representative of UNICEF, which currently holds the chairmanship of JCGP, presented a status report on JCGP activities that was made available to the Committee for its information and highlighted salient aspects of those activities.

G. Future programme of work, provisional agenda and date of next meeting

Future programme of work for 1993-1994

42. Considering that a number of key elements relating to the restructured ACC machinery would only be determined and clarified at the spring session of ACC, the Committee agreed on a provisional programme of work which its members would review at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

43. The provisional programme will include:

1. Overall policy issues:

   (a) Implications of global and United Nations system reforms and of development and resource trends;

   (b) Social objectives for the 1990s.

2. Programme coordination:

   (a) Elaboration of common goals and strategies;

   (b) Humanitarian assistance;

   (c) Poverty alleviation.

3. Operational activities:

   (a) Implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199.

4. Other matters:

(a) Progress reports on issues under consideration;

(b) Review of reports of subsidiary bodies;

(c) Draft ACC comments on Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reports;

(d) Practical arrangements relating to the functioning of CCSQ.

44. More specifically, and in the light of the above, the Committee agreed on the following provisional agenda for its second regular session of 1993:

1. Implications of global and United Nations system reforms and of development and resource trends.

2. (a) Poverty alleviation - enhancing collaboration within the system;

(b) Follow up to the Economic and Social Council Coordination Segment.*

3. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 in the light also of the July 1993 session of the Economic and Social Council:

(a) Country Strategy Note;

(b) Programme approach evaluation;

(c) Decentralization;

(d) Operational activities training;

(e) Resident coordinator system.

4. (a) Review of the practical arrangements following ACC decisions on the restructuring of its subsidiary machinery including:

Review of subsidiary bodies;

Budget of the Committee;

(b) Draft ACC comments on JIU reports;

(c) Progress reports.

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* It is expected that the key substantive issues on the Economic and Social Council agenda each year will require attention by CCSQ in support of ACC's own consideration of those matters.

45. The Committee recommended that its next session be held in New York during the week of 20 September 1993. It also agreed to hold an inter-sessional meeting in New York in June 1993, while the UNDP Governing Council was in session, to deal with issues relating both to its role and functioning in the light of decisions taken at ACC in April on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 and to the updating of the system-wide action plan on international drug abuse control.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman: Y. Berthelot (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development)

Consultant: P. Kumarakulasinghe

Secretary: J. Lee-de Laurentis (United Nations)

United Nations, its entities and programmes

United Nations	M. Stoby C. Ossa S. Fareed F. Haemmerli M. Marchal
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	L. Waldheim-Natural
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)	M. Hildebrand L. Ludvigsen
Economic Commission for Europe (representing regional commissions)	B. Duke
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	P. Tsyba
United Nations Environment Programme	S. M. Osman A. Z. Amin
United Nations Children's Fund	P. Altesman M. Kamau
United Nations Development Programme	J. J. Graisse P. Matthews
United Nations Volunteers Programme	B. McSweeney S. Hasegawa
United Nations Population Fund	S. L. N. Rao V. Ponniah
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	E. Morris S. Berglund Y. Stevens
International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT	M. Deeny

World Food Programme	B. Szynalski J. Powell Z. Mesa

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organisation	F. Tremeaud O. Hemprechts M. Read J. de Martino
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	A. Regnier D. Forbes Watt E. W. Hein A. Purcell
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	T. Keller P. Berry
International Civil Aviation Organization	K. K. Wilde
World Health Organization	D. G. Aitken Y. Kawaguchi D. Deane
World Bank	W. D. Haddad S. Lateef
Universal Postal Union	K. Samawi
International Telecommunication Union	T. Ras-Work J. Elotu
World Meteorological Organization	J. R. Lincoln
International Maritime Organization	A. Macauley
World Intellectual Property Organization	S. Alikhan K. Suedi
International Fund for Agricultural Development	U. Abhyankar
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	H. Mehdi
International Atomic Energy Agency	E. Polansky
General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade	B. Weigel

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ILO Turin Centre	H. Geiser
Senior Consultant, Turin Centre	P. Berthoud

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Annex II

AGENDA OF THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF 1993

1. Adoption of the agenda.

2. The role and functioning of the new Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions and its draft terms of reference.

3. Review of the subsidiary machinery of ACC:

Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities;

Ad Hoc Inter-agency Working Group on Demographic Estimates and Projections;

Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meetings on Coordination in Matters of International Drug Abuse Control;

Task Force on Rural Development.

4. Coordination of humanitarian assistance.

5. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199.

6. Poverty reduction.

7. Other matters:

(a) Review of policies and procedures on technical cooperation amongst developing countries based on a document prepared by the inter-agency group of TCDC focal points;

(b) Progress reports:

(i) Expanded operational activities training programme;

(ii) Guidelines for the use of United Nations Volunteers;

(iii) Implementation of the successor support costs arrangements;

(iv) Status reports of JCGP activities.

8. Future programme of work, provisional agenda and date for second regular session.

Annex III

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE (NEW) CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

The Committee will advise and assist ACC on a wide range of issues, with a view to promoting complementarities and mobilizing the United Nations system's analytical, normative and operational capacities for economic and social development in support of common goals and agreed strategies. To this end, it will in particular:

1. Ensure an ongoing dialogue regarding major strategies, approaches and issues relevant to the development activities of the United Nations system and consider modalities for the system to respond to socio-economic challenges facing the international community;

2. Consider issues related to enhancing the responsiveness of the system to national objectives and priorities, taking into account global and regional goals and strategies; promote programme coordination and collaborative arrangements among organizations of the system around substantive priority themes; and review their progress periodically;

3. Consider and monitor progress on measures to enhance the programming, implementation and cost-effectiveness of the system's operational activities, in accordance with national plans and priorities and the impact of such measures on strengthening national capacities;

4. Consider matters relating to improved cooperation and coordination of action and effective harmonization of activities at the field level;

5. Prepare recommendations and/or policy options for consideration by ACC, inter alia, in response to requests by intergovernmental bodies;

6. Recommend, where appropriate, measures for implementation of policy guidance emanating from intergovernmental bodies and periodically review progress in this regard;

7. Review the reports of designated subsidiary bodies and, as appropriate, make specific recommendations for consideration by ACC.

The Committee should draw on the expertise of its member organizations to fulfil its functions and, as necessary, may convene task-oriented working groups to assist it in addressing specialized subjects within its mandate.

Annex IV

DEVELOPING A COMMON INTERPRETATION OF THE PROGRAMME APPROACH IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: STATUS AND ISSUES

Introduction

1. In its resolution 47/199, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to promote an early agreement on a common interpretation of the programme approach, including an effective methodology for evaluation, to be applied by the United Nations system, with due regard to country-specific circumstances, and to report thereon to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1993.

2. It requested the Economic and Social Council to examine the above-mentioned report at its substantive session of 1993 and to determine whether effective and coordinated actions were being taken on the matter by the United Nations development system.

3. The above request for action builds on General Assembly resolution 44/211, in which the Assembly, inter alia, decided that all relevant governing bodies, in particular the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, should develop more programme-oriented mechanisms for the provision of technical cooperation (see para. 17 (d)).

4. In response to General Assembly resolution 44/211 and related resolutions, in October 1992 ACC adopted a "common United Nations framework" for the programme approach. This common framework includes objectives, definitions and guiding principles for the programme approach and is contained in document ACC/1992/27, annex IV.

A. The national programme as the basis of the programme approach

5. The programme approach can be said to assume a hierarchy of decision-making at the national level on national development issues that determines whether and how a programme approach might be followed by Government. At the top of the hierarchy is a national development goal, presumably determined in response to existing conditions or problems. At the next level down, Government considers development strategy - how best to achieve the development goal. The strategic choice may or may not decide that a national programme is the best option. When Government chooses to create or revitalize a national programme as the vehicle for achievement of the national goal, it has opted for a programme approach. The national programme is a coherent set of policies, strategies, activities and investments designed to achieve the national development goal. Implementation of a national programme often requires external assistance. Under the programme approach, donors respond to this request by formulating and negotiating a programme of support for the national programme. This programme of support may be made up of various components or projects, depending on the modality used by the donor organization and the degree of flexibility it is permitted to use in providing direct budget support. The core of a programme approach by external

donors is the use of their funds in a form best suited to achieving programme goals, no longer structured by projects but targeted to objectives.

6. In the context of this conceptual framework, it is generally agreed that national programmes, goals or strategies are preconditions for the programme approach and that ownership of the programme and responsibility for programme development belong to Government.

7. The annex represents a common interpretation of the programme approach by the United Nations system. However, the various agencies of the system have had to respond in different ways in operationalizing the concept of the programme approach when developing their own programmes of assistance.

B. A holistic response from the United Nations system

8. The ACC common framework foresees a coherent and coordinated United Nations system response to a national strategy and programme framework. It states that an analytical synthesis of national programme frameworks would provide the basis for a policy and strategy framework for the United Nations system's operational activities in a country. It further declares that the value of the system's contribution will depend on its ability to provide a holistic response to national plans and priorities.

9. All United Nations development system organizations are interested in coordinating their assistance to Governments. The application of a programme approach is seen as laying a basis for the coordination of external contributions to national programmes. However, a holistic or coordinated response from the United Nations system implies some kind of coordinated planning among United Nations organizations. The United Nations resident coordinator system has been strengthened to respond to this need.

C. Assistance in programme development

10. Many organizations have already started to follow a programme approach in the programming of their cooperation at the national level. In countries where national programme frameworks exist, country programmes are designed both in the context of and in support of such national frameworks. In those countries where such a framework does not exist, the United Nations development system may assist developing countries, at their request, in formulating such frameworks. Flexibility will nevertheless be required in determining whether a national programme framework should be made a prerequisite for the provision of agencies' assistance.

D. Accountability for national programmes versus accountability for resources provided by United Nations organizations

11. The common framework lists as its first objective recognition of the central role, ownership and accountability of the Government for national programmes. In other words, Government has overall responsibility for the success or failure of a national programme. United Nations organizations are accountable to their governing bodies for the resources they provide in support of national programmes. Thus, the various kinds of suggested or required documentation that describe United Nations organizations' support to a national programme, for example, programme support documents, programme component documents or project documents, which are prepared not only for planning purposes but also for accountability.

12. United Nations organizations are required to take appropriate measures to fulfil the accountability requirements of both their governing bodies and the eventual funding source. These same requirements, by mandating certain formats and procedures, add complexity and difficulty to the coordination, simplification and harmonization of the United Nations system response to Government programme needs.

E. United Nations organization country programmes

13. The term "programme approach", which defines programme as the national programme of Government, poses some semantic and practical problems. One common usage of the word programme occurs in the term "country programme" of a United Nations organization. This usage defines the programme as the systematic presentation of activities, projects and other support that will be provided by a United Nations organization in the context of national needs. Such support may or may not be provided to formally established national programmes. In many United Nations organizations, particularly funding organizations, the country programme document is the basis for approval of country-level resource allocation by the organization's governing body.

14. The semantic problem is simply that under the programme approach, the programme is that of the Government, whereas in country programme usage the programme is that of the United Nations Organization.

15. The practical problem is that both these connotations have important operational significance. The evaluation process will therefore have to take account, on the basis of field trials, of the degree of flexibility required and the interrelationship between an organization's planning strategy and the implementation of its technical cooperation programmes.

F. Advocacy roles of United Nations organizations

16. The programme approach promotes a broad-ranging dialogue between United Nations bodies and recipient countries on national development goals, policies, strategies and programmes and the ways in which United Nations bodies may support them. It should facilitate a better mutual understanding of developing country aspirations and plans and United Nations body mandates, priorities and comparative advantage.

17. It should ensure both a greater degree of convergence between each United Nations body's activities in support of national programmes and enhanced collaboration between United Nations bodies in support of national programmes. It will, however, raise some practical problems. For example, it will render evaluation more difficult, because it will not be easy to ascertain the impact of the United Nations body's contribution to a national programme. Again, it may make issues such as targeting the poor more problematic. It may also increase the risk of dependency, to the extent that recipient Governments may come to rely on existing or imminent levels of support to national programmes.

G. Conclusions

18. This note has focused on the ACC common framework for the programme approach. Further review is essential, in view of the evolving nature of programme approach concepts and the growing body of field experience, as well as its use by participating Governments and their reactions to this experience.

19. The governing bodies of United Nations organizations have established over time various mandatory formats and procedures for the formulation, approval and implementation of assistance in each organization. These formats and procedures are directly linked to the accountability requirements that the governing bodies have set out for the organizations. The terminology and procedures of these requirements may complicate the shift to a programme approach. Measures towards harmonization should therefore be taken.

20. The common framework provides the basic elements for a common interpretation of the programme approach. But applications of the programme approach by United Nations organizations vary widely. Thus, the question arises as to how strictly the common framework, or any common interpretation, is to be applied by United Nations organizations. Is the programme approach to be understood and agreed in principle only or in all procedural details as well? Is there only one acceptable interpretation of the programme approach or are there acceptable variations, even different versions? How can it be adapted by agencies with very focused technical functions? A diversity in the application of the programme approach will have to be recognized. Testing and review of the application of the programme approach must be undertaken on a system-wide basis in collaboration with Governments, with a view to greater convergence, if possible.

Annex V

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS AND THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM:
GUIDANCE NOTE

The role of the United Nations Volunteers in the system's operational activities

United Nations Volunteers today

1. The United Nations system has made increasing use of volunteer development workers in its programmes of technical cooperation since the 1960s. Initially, agencies collaborated individually with bilateral volunteer-sending agencies. Since the establishment of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme by the General Assembly in 1970 (General Aseembly resolution 2659/XXV) under the general aegis of UNDP, much of the demand for volunteer development workers in the system has been channelled through UNV.

2. The scope and participation of UNV throughout the entire range of technical cooperation programmes is reflected in the presence in 1993 of some 2,500 UNV specialists and community-level field workers across 140 professions in over 100 developing countries (two thirds in least developed countries), themselves originating from about 120 countries world wide. About half serve within projects executed by United Nations specialized agencies, the rest directly with Governments, as well as with community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations. The multilateral character of the programme offers a unique opportunity for volunteers from developing countries to serve abroad and these make up some three quarters of the total.

3. There is increasing recognition for the maturity, 10-15 years of relevant experience, and professional competence of today's UNV specialists. Nevertheless, there continues to be widespread misunderstanding about the term "volunteer", often taken to mean a junior and inexperienced partner whose main advantage is that of constituting a lower burden on project budgets. One problem is the limited visibility of UNV in the United Nations system even today. Part of the reason relates to UNV being viewed, at the country level, as solely a UNDP programme, particularly since nearly 80 per cent of the resources used to finance UNV assignments still come from UNDP Indicative Planning Figures. UNV's mandate, however, is clearly to serve the United Nations system as a whole, while remaining under the administration of UNDP and sharing its field infrastructure. There is much greater scope for using agency regular programme resources, donor trust funds and "multi-bi" commitments, as well as World Bank and development bank loans and government cost-sharing contributions.

Traditional and new roles

4. Experience has shown that volunteers can constitute a highly effective field-level arm of United Nations system technical cooperation and are particularly well positioned when required to reach out directly to grass-roots groups, serve in remote locations and work with local government services and organizations in the districts and provinces. The special human values of volunteer work lend their importance: notions of service, partnership and

solidarity under frequently difficult conditions; willingness to share responsibilities with national co-workers as performers and problem solvers, which is crucial to on-the-job training; and participatory emphasis on mutual learning and adaptation to local circumstances.

5. Over the last two decades, skilled volunteer specialists have become a regular component of international project teams and are increasingly required to take up more responsible positions in recognition of their experience. Strengthening outreach and on-the-job training of national technical staff on a peer basis have been characteristics of their contribution. Another major area of comparative advantage is support to community-based action, or situations in which bringing the community perspective to bear is an essential prerequisite of appropriate institution building, policy formulation and advice. Experience has been built up largely through the Domestic Development Services programme since the late 1970s. A third area is that of humanitarian efforts related to the massive disruption of essential services and the large-scale displacement of populations, as well as community participation in disaster preparedness. More recently, volunteers have started playing important roles in peace-related activities such as preparing for and monitoring elections. These latter windows of activity are rapidly expanding areas of UNV strength and involvement, based on flexibility and fast response, an experienced human resource pool and streamlined operational procedures. Procedures that ensure rapid recruitment and deployment of UNVs are increasingly important for the whole range of these actions.

6. Earlier interest expressed by Government and United Nations system partners with regard to greater flexibility of planning UNV assignments have been addressed in recent years. UNV has been focusing its efforts towards being as responsive as possible to country needs: it is possible to envisage UNV assignments spanning periods that go from three months to six years, with the understanding that short assignments tend to push up the cost. UNV has also started promoting the use of locally recruited national UNVs and field workers, drawn from their own communities as far as possible, to work together with international UNVs.

7. With the essential objective being that of strengthening grass-roots and national human resource capacity for development, a variety of imaginative means that involve UNV as a global facilitating mechanism for creating linkages and networks among non-governmental and community-based organizations in both a South-South and North-South direction and that encourage exchanges of experience are open to much greater use. UNV recruitment is being widened beyond the usual academically qualified candidates to tap the considerable potential for "barefoot" UNV specialists with extensive practical skills and experience to act as trainers. More interest has been expressed in obtaining UNV support for stimulating the growth of local volunteer contributions to development in major areas of national concern, from literacy and employment promotion to environmental management. The links that volunteers can help make among non-governmental and community-based organizations, local authorities and State services offer great interest in a world in which many more development initiatives are being taken through organized forms of public action, by civil society.

8. In defining the needs and roles of volunteers in development, it is the search for complementarity with other human resources in technical cooperation that determines their respective niches. To take full advantage of the above areas of comparative advantage, however, rather than using UNVs primarily as a low-cost input, programming links with the United Nations specialized agencies need to be strengthened, especially at the country level. There is much scope for building closer professional relationships between the volunteer specialists, fieldworkers and their other United Nations system colleagues in related areas of work, whether they are part of the same project teams or not. While the United Nations system is now much more aware of these possibilities, ways need to be found for systematically incorporating this potential at the planning and design stages of technical cooperation (TC).

Programmming considerations

9. At a time when escalating TC costs are coming under greater scrutiny within limited project budgets, the first step is to review ongoing programmes systematically and identify the scope for making greater use of UNV specialists, in place of their originally planned role as experts or consultants.

10. The second is for the United Nations system to consider explicitly the contribution of volunteer development workers to major areas of development concern during the early stages of programming. This may be done during sector analysis and planning missions (e.g. funded under TSS-I), or as part of the National Technical Cooperation Assessment and Programmes process and round-table exercises. UNV's 70 programme officers, stationed in nearly as many countries, are a significant resource for such programme formulation purposes that is underutilized by United Nations system partners.

11. United Nations agencies should be aware, in designing innovative development programmes, of the potential offered by the variety of new mechanisms provided by UNV: mixed teams of national UNVs and community volunteers, together with those from abroad; shorter-term assignments of varying duration, including those of the United Nations International Short Term Advisory Resources; the exchange of experience between programmes and institutions, usually in a South-South direction and often within the same subregion, that may be arranged through UNV assignment channels.

12. As the United Nations system becomes more involved in the programme approach and programmes under national execution, it becomes even more important for the system to consider, under government leadership, the role of volunteer development workers at the conceptual rather than the delivery stage. It is here that the choice will be made of the type of programme, its reflection of either a base-upwards or top-down perspective, the extent of its South-South nature and the shape and sustainability of the human resource effort required to undertake it. Innovation in bringing a stronger community-based perspective into the total development effort would normally consider the potential of volunteer-intensive programmes, together with non-governmental and community-based organizations.

13. For humanitarian or peace-related programmes, UNV-managed human resources should be considered and their need estimated at the appeals stage, so that these are included as an integral part of the package.

14. Funding for operational activities out of non-IPF sources, such as agency regular programmes, donor trust funds and "multi-bi" commitments, as well as World Bank loans and government cost-sharing contributions, may be an attractive option in terms of stretching resource use to optimum levels.

15. It is equally important, however, that stronger programming links be built between the United Nations system agencies and UNV at the headquarters level. Initial exercises have highlighted the value of developing joint programme approach outlines in different thematic and sectoral areas of work, as well as the joint exploration of the type of experience and personality profiles of volunteer candidates that need to be built up. These serve to illustrate volunteer roles graphically and concretely, as a basis for stimulating programme response and dialogue at the country level.

16. These links may be strengthened systematically with benefit for the operational stages as well, from the identification, recruitment and technical clearance of candidates, to monitoring and supporting their field performance, sharing experiences through regional workshops and conducting joint evaluation exercises.

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For further information on United Nations Volunteers, kindly contact the offices of the United Nations resident coordinators in the field, or UNV headquarters in Geneva:

United Nations Volunteers
Palais des Nations
CH - 1211, Geneva 10
Switzerland

Tel: (41 22) 788 24 55
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Annex VI

THE COUNTRY STRATEGY NOTE

I. BASIC PRINCIPLES

Purpose

The Country Strategy Note should be formulated by interested recipient Governments with the assistance of and in cooperation with the United Nations system in accordance with the principles established in General Assembly resolution 47/199, paragraph 9. In particular, the Country Strategy Note must be based on the priorities and plans of recipient countries and should be designed to ensure the effective integration of assistance provided by the United Nations system in the development process of countries. It should facilitate accountability and the assessment and evaluation of the impact and sustainability of United Nations assistance.

The Country Strategy Note will be developed in all countries where the Government so chooses. It should be a mechanism for substantive assessment of key development issues of concern to the country and, above all, for mobilizing United Nations assistance in a collaborative manner. It should focus on areas where the United Nations system (collectively or individually) could make a significant difference.

Content

The Country Strategy Note should truly reflect the national priorities of the recipient Government. It should also build upon and be consistent with internationally approved strategies such as the International Development Strategy, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, and thematic programmes of action emanating from the governing bodies of the United Nations system and the General Assembly.

The Country Strategy Note should focus on those key areas for which the United Nations system collaboration will make a distinct difference and where the United Nations system has an advantage. It should be concerned with the full range of potential cooperation, not only technical cooperation (policy advice, along with substantive and management services) material and financial inputs, and human resources, but also food aid.

Coordination

In accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 47/199, the contribution of the United Nations system to the Country Strategy Note should be formulated under the leadership of the resident coordinator, in order to ensure greater coordination and cooperation at the field level.

In this regard, the Country Strategy Note should serve as a broad framework for the project and programme preparation processes of the respective United Nations organizations. It shall not substitute for them. Each organization must remain accountable for the use of its funds in accordance with its mandates

and procedures and through the established direct links with its government counterparts. It is the responsibility of each organization to ensure that its analytical and operational projects and programmes are supportive and consistent with the overall Country Strategy Note.

The Country Strategy Note should be fully taken into account by United Nations system field representatives, when carrying out major programming exercises.

Necessary steps need to be taken to establish an appropriate field committee, in accordance with paragraphs 40 and 41 of resolution 47/199.

The resident coordinator has a special responsibility to ensure the coherence of the contribution of the United Nations system to the Country Strategy Note. To this end, she/he should form subgroups focused on the key themes of the Country Strategy Note. These subgroups should be chaired by the organization or individual best suited to the task (including the resident coordinator), and should operate under the overall guidance of the resident coordinator.

In order to cooperate with and support the Government in preparing the Country Strategy Note and to accommodate the fact that not all agencies or United Nations bodies are represented at the country level, the resident coordinator will invite those organizations not represented to submit a written input or send a representative to participate in the drafting of a Country Strategy Note.

II. PROCEDURES

Team effort

The Country Strategy Note is prepared by Governments of interested recipient countries with the assistance of and in cooperation with the United Nations system under the leadership of the resident coordinator.

In carrying out his/her task, the resident coordinator should work with team of United Nations organizations present or actively involved in the country, working on a collegial and consensual basis, with the resident coordinator as the team leader.

In accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 47/199, the Country Strategy Note should be transmitted to the governing bodies of United Nations organizations as a reference for the consideration of their specific country programme and projects.

III. LINKING THE OPERATIONAL, RESEARCH AND REGIONAL CAPACITIES

Full use needs to be made of the analytical and normative roles of the specialized agencies (for agencies without field representation, this should be drawn from their headquarters). Their work should be central to the contribution of the United Nations to the Country Strategy Notes, bearing in mind that some activities may have a regional or global dimension. Likewise, stronger links need to be made with the research work now being carried out by United Nations headquarters locations, which might also themselves benefit from stronger links with field practitioners. Finally, there is still untapped potential in the regional organizations and greater use should be made of regional networks.

IV. LINKS WITH BRETON WOODS INSTITUTIONS

The United Nations team should have more extensive mutual consultation with the Bretton Woods institutions. In accordance with national priorities, the contribution of the United Nations to the Country Strategy Note should be based, inter alia, on interaction with key exercises such as the formulation of Policy Framework Papers, Structural or Sectoral Adjustment Programme Loans, Public Investment Programmes and Public Expenditure Programmes. This interaction is to support both complementary roles and help bring to the fore viewpoints which United Nations organizations may be able to provide from their unique perspective. These links should also help ensure that Governments have access to a broad range of policy advice.

V. LINKS WITH OTHER EXTERNAL DONORS

The Country Strategy Note, along with the analytical work underlying its preparation, could help facilitate a more effective participation by the United Nations system in donor-wide groups such as consultative groups and round tables.

The Country Strategy Note could also be useful to external donors seeking analytical advice and therefore help mobilize a wide range of donors behind key government priorities.

VI. USING TARGETS AND A PROGRAMME APPROACH

To the extent possible, and as agreed by the Government, the Country Strategy Note should highlight key development goals and targets that the United Nations system should help support. Many monitorable targets have already been established by universally agreed upon strategies. The Country Strategy Note should help establish a process for reviewing and evaluating the degree to which United Nations system assistance is actually helping support progress towards these targets and thus being provided in a flexible and effective manner - a key part of moving to a programme approach.

VII. EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The utilization and impact of the Country Strategy Note will be evaluated at the initiative of the Government.

Evaluations should ideally be carried out in cooperation with the United Nations system. These would provide a common basis for a review of progress made and problems encountered by the respective partners.

Annex VII

NATIONAL EXECUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Background

The primary objective of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system is to promote the self-reliance of developing countries through multilateral cooperation, a/ or in other words, to contribute to building/strengthening national capacities. It is thus implicit that the nature of the assistance and the relationships between a recipient Government and its development partners will evolve with changing needs and circumstances. The basic role of United Nations system development cooperation programmes and activities remains one of providing substantive policy advice to Governments and of transferring and adapting skills and technology, while optimizing the comparative advantages the United Nations system enjoys over other sources of assistance. The essence of the transfer is know-how, not financial resources, to enable the Government fully to manage its development efforts and achieve an increasing degree of national self-reliance.

Recipient Governments have the sole responsibility for the coordination of external assistance and the principal responsibility for its design and management, and the exercise of those responsibilities is crucial to the optimal use of external assistance and to the strengthening and utilization of national capacity. The fuller utilization of national capacities would moreover promote the long-term sustainability and greater impact of programmes and projects. It is therefore of particular importance that substance be given to the basic premise that all programmes and projects are national undertakings and are managed by the Government.

Objectives

(a) Recognition of the central role, "ownership", direction, and control of the Government;

(b) Enhancement of capacity-building, self-reliance and sustainability, including through the building of national institutions and their management;

(c) Internalizing of external inputs and ensuring greater relevance and impact in relation to national programmes.

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a/ In paragraph (e) (i) of the annex to its resolution 3405 (XXX), the General Assembly stated that self-reliance should be promoted in developing countries "by building up, inter alia, their productive capacities and their indigenous resources and by increasing the availability of the managerial, technical, administrative and research capabilities required in the development process".

Definitions

National execution is a cooperative operational arrangement entailing, inter alia, overall responsibility for the formulation and management of programmes and projects by the recipient country, as well as the latter's assumption of accountability for them.

Implementation on the other hand entails the procurement and delivery of all programme/project inputs and their conversion into programme/project outputs.

Guiding principles

(a) All projects should be government-managed to the fullest extent consistent with available national capacities as determined principally by Governments themselves. National execution should become the norm for programmes and projects funded by the United Nations system. It should be pursued in a pragmatic manner, taking into account the needs and capacities of each developing country;

(b) Governments should assume overall accountability for all programmes and projects; the degree of accountability will similarly vary with the implementation modality and the other circumstances of the programme/project. The roles, responsibilities and accountability of each partner outlined in basic agreements should be further elaborated in each programme/project agreement;

(c) Irrespective of the implementation modality, a national project director should normally be designated, although the manner and extent to which he/she and the Government choose to exercise their authority will vary with the circumstances of each programme or project;

(d) A project implemented by a technical agency of the United Nations system should remain under the overall management and concomitant accountability of the recipient Government. The technical agency will remain accountable for its inputs to the Government and to the funding organization;

(e) Programmes and projects should reflect the fact that they are government undertakings and thus should initially be formulated without any distinction being drawn between external and national components. They should then be scrutinized to ascertain the optimum degree to which its various components can be met by the recipient country itself. Special attention should be given to components which could be met by national capacities if supplemented by limited external inputs such as short-term consultancies. The latter and remaining requirements could then be addressed as the externally financed project component within the larger national undertaking;

(f) Governments should continue to have access to the neutral policy, technical advice and support of the United Nations system irrespective of the arrangements finally adopted for implementing such assistance;

(g) All programmes and projects should be appraised by the external funding organization with the assistance of the relevant technical agency;

(h) The choice of the appropriate implementation modality(ies) for the externally financed project or component thereof could cover a range of options including national implementation, subcontracting to national institutions, TCDC, United Nations agency implementation, external subcontracting, the use of national project personnel, United Nations volunteers, or a combination of these;

(i) Both at the formulation and appraisal of programmes and projects, in considering the choice of implementation modality, regard should be paid to the existence and availability (without prejudice to the broader development effort) of the technical, administrative and managerial capacities of the recipient Government/institution;

(j) Technical agencies of the system have an important responsibility as policy and technical advisers and as sources of specialized knowledge. Governments should have full access and indeed should be encouraged to utilize these services in respect of all programmes and projects, irrespective of the implementation modality adopted, so as to better ensure their technical viability, quality and impact. Funding organizations of the system should in any case make full use of the capacities of the technical agencies, particularly as a means of ensuring substantive accountability;

(k) The role of the technical agencies of the system would, on request, include substantive policy advice, sectoral and intersectoral studies and other upstream activities and the design and formulation of programmes and projects, irrespective of and without prejudice to the implementation modality to be adopted. Their assistance may also include:

(i) Project identification, project design and formulation;

(ii) Appraisal of project proposals and advice on implementation options;

(iii) Preparation of job descriptions, identification and appraisal of candidates;

(iv) Preparation of equipment specifications or subcontract tender documents, technical appraisal of bids, assistance in negotiations and selection;

(v) Identification and/or organization of training programmes;

(vi) Maintaining rosters of consulting firms, experts and suppliers, as well as contacts with such firms, institutions and universities specifically for operational activities;

(vii) Technical monitoring through reports and participation in tripartite and other reviews;

(viii) Participation in tripartite evaluations;

(ix) Additional technical support required for specific projects, including technical panels, extra support missions, redesign of technical approaches, ad hoc technical information and advice;

(l) In the process of monitoring a project or component, the Government and the funding organization should be encouraged to ensure through relevant mechanisms the involvement of the relevant technical agency or financial institution of the United Nations system, even when it is not involved in execution or implementation, so as to ensure the multilateral character of assistance and accountability to and of the funding source;

(m) All programmes and projects managed or only implemented in part by a national agency/institution should, as far as possible, include specific goals and time-frames for the progressive transfer of all remaining responsibilities to that agency/institution. The aim would be to ensure that the national agency/institution would assume total responsibility for all aspects of the project before the termination of the project cycle. Such an approach would also enhance its sustainability and long-term impact;

(n) The simplification and, as far as would be appropriate, the harmonization of rules and procedures (including those relating to programmes and project formulation, design, approval processes, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting requirements) should also be actively pursued;

(o) The enhancement of self-reliance calls for concerted efforts by Governments themselves to strengthen national institutional capacities through, for example, the improvement of civil service structures and conditions and of conditions of employment for trained managers and technicians (bearing in mind also the heavy turnover of qualified national personnel) and expanded training programmes. In taking measures to mitigate the effects of current limitations in national capacities, the United Nations system should for its part ensure that these are of a temporary nature, are resorted to on an exceptional basis and are linked to operational plans and timetables for longer-term remedial action by Governments.

Annex VIII

AREAS OF POTENTIAL COLLABORATION ON POVERTY REDUCTION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The following are potential areas of collaboration:

(a) Analysis of the consistency of country policies, programmes and institutions with the reduction of poverty:

(i) Country analysis: the World Bank is currently carrying out poverty assessments in some 59 countries in the financial year 1993-1995. UNDP is carrying out human development assessments in several countries. UNICEF prepares periodic reports on the status of women and children. There is therefore considerable scope for cooperation and collaboration in this analysis;

(ii) Economic and sector work: collaboration is also possible in areas such as food security assessments, public expenditure reviews and analysis of labour markets. The appraisal of policies that target low-income strata or extreme poverty groups are particularly important;

(iii) Capacity-building: there is considerable scope for strengthening the capacity of countries to undertake their own analysis of policies, programmes and institutions;

(b) Assisting countries develop poverty reduction strategies as part of an overall sustainable development strategy:

(i) Preparing country development strategies: drawing on the analytical work described above;

(ii) Capacity-building: strengthening the capacity of Governments to develop poverty reduction strategies;

(iii) Adjustment programmes: ensuring adequate attention to human resource development and poverty strategies in adjustment programmes and providing advice on safety nets and social funds;

(c) Strengthening capacity to implement poverty reduction strategies:

(i) Strengthening central ministries, agencies charged with key subsectors such as human resource development, or with the management of social funds or targeted poverty interventions;

(ii) Helping Governments to be more participatory in the design and implementation of programmes, drawing, inter alia, on non-governmental organizations and beneficiary groups;

(iii) Ensuring that the United Nations system is itself more participatory in the design and implementation of relevant programmes;

(d) Improving the information base. Helping to improve the quality and reliability of data on poverty is critical to effective poverty reduction. Accurate data on the extent and depth of poverty and the main characteristics of the poor, such as their sources of income, the characteristics of the goods they produce and consume, their access to publicly provided goods, their geographical distribution and their assets, facilitate the process of designing policies and programmes to favour the poor. The following kinds of data are needed:

(i) Household-level data. Only 50 per cent of developing countries have household-level data and only in 25 per cent of these is the data satisfactory. A more vigorous effort is needed to improve household data using new information technologies based on rapid data entry and management and rapid processing;

(ii) Priority poverty indicators. Such indicators as agricultural value added per capita or rural terms of trade for the poor, who rely mainly on land for their income, real farm agricultural wages for the rural landless poor, real unskilled wages for the urban poor and key consumer prices provide a more complete picture of poverty;

(iii) Data on access to social services. Access to services is usually measured as an average and does not tell us much about the access of the poor to such services. This is an important area for future work;

(iv) Short-run indicators. Immunization coverage and nutrition status tend to fluctuate widely and need monitoring;

(v) Data on public expenditures. Data on public expenditures are poor in many countries, particularly for social services, since many of these expenditures are carried out by local governments whose information base is even poorer than that of central Governments;

(vi) Data on capacity-building. Strengthening the capacity of Governments to collect and analyse data on poverty is a critical need; helping them establish priorities in this area is also important;

(e) Aid coordination. Effective aid coordination is critical to a sound poverty-reduction strategy. This implies adequate preparation for local-level aid coordination meetings, consultative groups chaired by the World Bank and round tables chaired by UNDP. This is an important area for coordination;

(f) Monitoring and evaluation. Sharing the results of the monitoring and evaluation of activities undertaken in countries would enable agencies to learn from each other's mistakes and to disseminate best practice more widely. These efforts need to be supplemented by participatory beneficiary assessments.